



Towards Employment

PRESS RELEASE

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TALENTNEO ANALYSIS REVEALS SKILL ASSESMENTS CAN REDUCE HIRING DISPARITIES BY RACE

Skill assessment tools level the employment field among White and Black/African American job seekers

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Cleveland – Towards Employment and partners released an analysis of a demonstration program called TalentNEO that has promising implications for reducing hiring racial disparities by using tools that assess skills instead of traditional hiring credentials.

Launched in 2015, TalentNEO used skill scores to match individuals with employers in Cuyahoga County. **Within 12 months of the assessment, the racial hiring disparities between White and Black/African American participants was eliminated.** In addition, the rate of employment for Black/African American participants was almost 40% higher than Black/African American employment rates across Cuyahoga County.

While employment rates were increased for Black/African American participants, disparities in earnings remained persistent between White and Black/African American employees. White participants who had lower skill scores than Black/African American participants still had higher earnings.

“The results of TalentNEO are so important to the local conversation about racial equity,” says Jill Rizika, Executive Director of Towards Employment, “based on the outcomes of those who participated in the pilot, there is evidence that a skills-based hiring method eliminates hiring disparities by race for Black/African Americans individuals which is a win. However, the disparities in earnings between White and Black/African American employees reinforces what we know about income inequality in Greater Cleveland. We must build on efforts to better quantify the skill levels of our residents and continue to educate employers on skill scores as a way to secure a talented workforce.”

The report also reveals that Northeast Ohio residents have the skill scores needed for the jobs in our region. Using skill scores instead of traditional education credentials may unlock a larger talent pool for the businesses and employers in our region.

[Read the full report on Towards Employment’s blog.](#)

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About TalentNEO: TalentNEO was led by Towards Employment in partnership with local community-based organizations, business groups, and the public workforce system. It was supported by The Cleveland Foundation, Deaconess Foundation, The Fund for Our Economic Future, JPMorgan Chase Foundation. For more information visit www.talentneo.org.

About Towards Employment: Our mission is to empower individuals to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through employment. Towards Employment is a proven leader in workforce development that connects people to careers, which changes people's lives, advances businesses, and strengthens community in Northeast Ohio. Learn more about our work at www.towardsemployment.org.